

Fourth Edition.

Price ONE **Penny**

A
LETTER
ADDRESSED TO THE TRUE
REFORMERS
OF GREAT BRITAIN;

PROVING, FROM THE SCRIPTURES OF TRUTH, THAT THE LITERAL KEEPING OF AN
SABBATH DAY, OR PAYING ANY OBSERVANCE TO ANY SAINT DAY
OR FAST WHATEVER,

IS UNCHRISTIANLIKE.

AND CALLING UPON ALL SINCERE REFORMERS TO OPPOSE, BY EVERY MEANS IN
THEIR POWER, THE DOMINATION OF

Priestcraft,

THROUGH WHICH THE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN GULLED OF THEIR RIGHTS AND
RATIONAL PLEASURES,

“The Feast of Reason and the Flow of Soul,”

Under the Sanctimonious Plea of

Religion and Keeping the Lord's Day Holy

Religious ignorance and slavish fear,
With Mammon's beastly Priests bring up the rear ;
Join'd, by the rest of Reason's deadly foes,
The source and spring of all our hell of woe.

“ But now Truth's Sun illumines the mental sky.
The day of human Liberty is nigh ;
Her rays will drive the Parsons from our sight
To chaos, or the “ Shades of endless night ! ”

BIRMINGHAM :

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BROTHER REFORMERS,

SEEING that there are Petitions going to Parliament from various parts of the kingdom, praying for extra Laws to compel the people to observe the Sabbath more strictly, I am induced to make some observations upon the subject, as it is a subject in which every Member of the Community is deeply interested.

It makes me think that the pious people want to see more prosecutions on account of Religion; for should there be an additional Law made to enforce a more strict observance of the day called the Sabbath, there will then be plenty of prosecutions, far more than we have already—and *the would-be Saints will be upon the look out for victims, so great is their piety and zeal for the observance of the Lord's Day, as they call the Sunday.* Many a hundred poor men with large families in this country, cannot get their week's wages time enough on the Saturday evening to purchase the necessaries of life for their families, and are therefore obliged to purchase them on the Sunday morning. Many have suffered much already from the strict observance of the Sabbath Day; but should the Saints get, I say, a fresh Law made, *God be merciful to the Sinners, for the Saints will have none.* But be assured the law will be put in force every where by these extreme and strict Sabbath-keepers; the generality of whom, if their characters were known, are the greatest Grinders of the poor, and it is more than likely many of them have amassed riches by that very means; and now they are not content with that, *but they want to enslave the poor man ten times worse, by depriving him of all enjoyment of a social kind, or any degree of recreation.* He must be shut up all day on the Sunday either in his house or else at some Church, Chapel, or Conventicle, without being allowed to take a walk in the fields to breath the fresh air after his hard week's labour. This he must then submit to, or else be prosecuted as a Sabbath-breaker. Is it not a wonder that the vast body of Preachers, both of the Church and of the Dissenters, cannot by their preaching and good example, and all their extreme piety, get the people in the mind to love God so much as to keep the day holy? I think it is a bad sign. It shews that there is but little power in their Gospel when they are obliged to apply to the Government to get a Law made to force the people to perform their duty towards God, in honouring the *Lord's Day.* I think it is a good thing that the Lord does not lay claim to any more than one day out of the seven, for two or three Lord's Days in the week, (and particularly if we are to be laid under fresh restrictions in keeping them holy), would soon send three parts of the poor

to their graves; then the Great Saints would be in high glee. I cannot help saying so much as this, for I am compelled to it by the unfeelingness that I see (in those possessing riches and power) practised towards the poor man, that those great fat Saints would deprive the poor man of his little enjoyment or rural recreation on the only day that he can spare. Oppression will not allow him to take another day, and if he can have no enjoyment on that day he might as well be put out of the world at once. *I'll warrant it is those whose coffers are well filled that are the foremost in strict observance of the Sabbath, and to keep the poor man's nose to the Grinding-stone.*

Now, Sir, ever since I was a little boy I can remember our Parish Minister, and every other Minister indeed, exhorting the Congregation to read the Bible. I conscientiously took the advice, and I am very glad that I did, for by it I can see how ignorant those strict Sabbath-keepers are of the meaning of that Sacred Volume. *It is quite opposed to the spirit of that book to force mankind by a law to go to any particular Church, or to compel him to adhere to any form whatever, or to force him by a Law to keep a Sabbath at all; it is impious and wicked, and against the righteous Law of God,* whose word tells us that the keeping of a Sabbath day, along with the many other Carnal Ordinances, was a shadow of good things to come, and they were imposed upon men until the time of Reformation. Therefore, says Paul, "Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath, which things are a shadow of good things to come, but the Body or Substance is Christ. See Col. 2d chap. 16th, 17th verses; and read Hebrews, 9th chap. and 10th verse. Here is a plain command for me. I am not to give heed to any man's judgment when he judges that I ought to eat certain meats and use certain drinks, and that I ought not to eat other meats. I am not to be in bondage to the notions of Priests in these things. I will be free, and will eat and drink what I please, nor shall any man judge me with respect to the Sabbath no more than these. I will not keep a Sabbath day; it is but a shadow of good things to come, and what have I, as a Christian, to do with shadows. *It is unchristian to keep a Sabbath day at all. Those that keep it are under the Law, and consequently are not Christians, but are followers of Jewish Fables.* They might as well be circumcised at once, and while they keep the Sabbath day as they do, they must be transgressors; for after all they cannot keep it holy, even according to their own notions. But I will not keep it at all! I will not be under that Law! And "where no Law is, there is no transgression!" I will no more be under a Law to keep a Sabbath day than any Priest should compel me either to

eat meat or not to eat it! Therefore I am free, and am no sinner because I cast away all law; and I do what the Gospel teaches, viz.—TO LOVE MY GOD AND MY NEIGHBOUR; and on these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets, and in doing this I fulfil the whole Law. I will neither keep the Saturday nor the Sunday as a Law of God, as a Sabbath. *I contend that it is wicked to keep it (with that idea), and against the Liberty of the Gospel—and those that would compel me to keep a Sabbath day would compel me to go against the Royal Law, the Law of Perfect Liberty.* And what is all the profession of Christianity as those strict Sabbath-keepers profess? Only Judaism under a different name? How long do the professed Saints mean to be in bondage themselves, and to keep the yoke upon the necks of others? Now they are petitioning Parliament to lay the yoke more grievously upon the people to observe that more strictly that ought to be done with—that the Scripture tells me was only a shadow of good things to come. How long will they be ignorant of the meaning of Scripture, which Book they so much boast of, and which they urge the people to read? We have read it, and by it I am instructed to be under no law, but under Grace.

When the Commandment said, “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day, six days shalt thou labour, &c. for the seventh day is the Sabbath, the Command, like that of Circumcision, was not understood by the people, and neither Jews nor Christians (so called) ever kept the Sabbath yet: no, never have they kept the Sabbath that God intended in this Command; neither were the Jews ever circumcised, according to the truth or meaning of the Scripture! for God did not mean for them to cut their flesh in the way they have done! No, not so, by no means! And just so with the Sabbath, though both were permitted, and they answered for shadows of good things to come. *Circumcise the foreskin of your hearts, says the Prophet, and be no more stiff-necked.*—10th chap. Deut. 16th v.

Now, by the Sabbath day, is not meant a day as it is understood in common. It means more than the day of twelve hours. We read of the Day of the Lord—we read of a Day of Clouds and of thick darkness—we read of the Day of Vengeance—we read of the Day when the Lord shall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound—we read of the Day of the Great Slaughter, when the Towers shall fall—and we read of the Day—[N. B.] WHEN WE SHALL TAKE THEM CAPTIVES WHOSE CAPTIVES WE WERE; AND WHEN WE SHALL RULE OVER OUR OPPRESSORS!!! We read of the Jubilee Day, &c. &c. &c.

This day points us to the latter time, which is called the time of Reformation—the time of refreshing from the pre-

sence of the Lord; and this is the Sabbath day that is commanded to be kept holy. There remaineth, therefore, a keeping of the Sabbath day (says Paul) to the People of God, viz.—To say, we do not keep the Sabbath yet, but there remaineth a rest to the People of God. And let us ask who are they? *Why, certainly, it is those that Reform? Those that will and are now claiming their Rights, both Spiritual and Temporal? Those that cast off all Religion as set up by Priestcraft?* Those that will deny the Sabbath day as a day to be kept as the Priests have taught, and that now will enter into rest? That will begin by Reformation? This is the true Scriptural Sabbath—these are the people of God. But all those that love bondage—that will be still old Sabbath-keepers and sticklers for the support and continuance of Old Jewish Customs, and will still bind these yokes on the necks of their Fellow Men—THESE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THE DEVIL—*i. e. they are the Slaves of Error and Corruption, and they are enemies to the Liberties of Mankind.* They serve the old God of the old world, that has terrified the whole world with threatenings of hell, fire, and damnation, if we did not keep the Sabbath day, and all the other things that the Dark God told us to attend to; but he never directed our attention to the true Sabbath. *Now this old God that is the author of all evil, we Reformers must deny, and break every yoke that he has put upon us. He has been a Great Maker of Religions of divers kinds*—an inventor of divers forms and modes of worship, bringing fresh things of this kind every day; and so he has diverted the people's minds with vain oblations, useless ceremonies, keeping of Sabbaths, meats and drinks, divers washings and sprinklings, wearing of beards, circumcisings, dressing in a particular form, putting on a demure countenance, walking mournfully, and a vast number of things which would be too tedious to mention. But I must mention one more evil that this Author of all evil has done. He has filled the world with men in what they call Holy Orders, and made all the others bow down to them, and do them reverence from the King to the beggar. These men have all the world in their string. They support Great Monarchs and Great Monarchs support them. But never mind! Let the People of God (the Reformers) be strong and courageous, for there remaineth a Sabbath for you. The People of the Devil will fight hard to keep their old kingdom, as you see them now petitioning for a more holy observance of the Shadow, without having an eye to the true Sabbath, which is rest after our long time of labour and toil to support Priestcraft and every other Craft, which things were imposed upon us until the time of Reformation. See, I have the Scripture on my side, and as those strict Sabbath-keepers do say that the Bible is the word of God,

they cannot get rid of our argument, viz.—that the Sabbath was only a sign of the real Sabbath—that is, the Reformation of Mankind in this latter day. For surely they will not say that there has been any Reformation since the commencement of the Christian Era? No! All the Reformation I know of was changing the day from the Saturday to the first day of the week, and they called the first day of the week the Christian Sabbath. But this is a grand mistake; it is only, as I say, Old Judaism in another dress. What Sabbath have the people enjoyed? What rest has there been? Has not there been war and murder ever since as much as before? Yes! and more than ever. *Kings have plundered other nations and murdered the inhabitants, more under the profession of Christianity than ever before.* There has been no Reformation, but now is the time; and I conceive that we are now about moving in this month of March, in the march of mind to the great universal Sabbath of rest. The Sun is now crossing the Line, and therefore you find the wind blowing from all quarters. **SEE THE MINDS OF MEN IN GENERAL? WHAT A CRY FOR REFORM THEY ARE INSPIRED WITH? YES, AND THEY WILL HAVE IT TOO,** notwithstanding the strife of the Sabbath-keepers to keep them in bondage to those laws. Reformers! touch not, taste not, handle not, any of the Old Religious Laws, but cast off all their doctrines and ceremonies, whether Sabbaths, Circumcisings, Washings, Dippings, Putting on of Apparel, or anything else. Cast off all these Religious Laws; they were Shadows and Carnal Ordinances imposed upon us until the time of Reformation, and by these things we have all been kept in bondage; but now we must reform from these things, *and we must strictly observe the Sabbath day to keep it wholly!! Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, saith the Lord.* Your Sabbaths, new moons, and your incense, my soul hateth. Your calling of assemblies to wit—the petitioning for fresh Laws to enforce a more strict observance of a Carnal Ordinance to support Priestcraft—I cannot away with. It is iniquity—even *your* solemn meetings, i. e. it is unequal—it is unjust—it is not God's Ordinance. God's Sabbath day is for us to be free from all that oppress us; first in mind by false Doctrines and Religious Observances of Sabbaths, and such like things, and every grievous burden of a temporal nature as well, and to be under no Religious Laws at all, but to love our God and our fellow men, and that love will constrain us to every thing that is lovely, good, amiable, and virtuous. I will take my rural walks—I will go upon the hills—and I will survey all nature. I will look with praise and thanksgiving to the God of nature—I will adore the kind and generous hand that has brought forth such a beautiful progeny before my eyes, and filled the earth with good—and I will enjoy it, and I will make merry with

my friends, and be happy with every man, to whom I will do all the good I can. I will enjoy my God, who is love; and no law shall govern me but it. For Love, says the Scripture, is the fulfilling of the Law; and as I am under no Law I can never be a transgressor of any, so I am holy and without blame before God. . N.B. In LOVE, so am I a true Reformer. My mind is quite reformed. I have cast off all the old Christian Laws; not one of them shall stick to me. I will not be under the Law of Sin. I should be ever a sinner if I still would be a Sabbath-keeper; but on that day, or on any day, I will go hunting, fishing, and fowling, or I will play a game of cricket or what other sport I might take a fancy too: and I will drink share of a can of ale or a bottle of wine with my friend or friends, both male and female; with whom I will converse freely and without reserve; and we will delight ourselves in the goodness of our God that has delivered us from the yoke of bondage (Priestcraft and all their Laws), which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear; and I shall commit no sin, being under no law, only the glorious and voluntary Law of Love, and that I can never break, for I see so many things, so many beauties in my Creator to love and admire, that I shall never cease loving and admiring; and I must love my fellow men. It is a principle inherent in my nature, especially now that I am converted or reformed, remodelled or renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created me, who is love and is free, and so am I the same. He has made me like himself, so I will ever praise him for my Creation, Preservation, and all the Blessings of this Life. Thus I keep the Sabbath. I enter into rest—I cease from my bondage, and labour, toil, and vexation that I laboured under—the Priests telling me that I should be damned if I did not keep their Sabbath. I was all my lifetime subject to their bondage, but now I am brought out of the Land of Egypt and out of the house of Bondage, and I will have none other God but the God that has brought me out and made me free, and that God is Knowledge and Righteousness, i. e. Right Reason, Sound Wisdom, and Discretion: this is the God of Peace and Love, and he tells me not to keep Sabbath Days, Fast Days, Christmas Days, Good Fridays, Ash Wednesdays, or any Saint Days, and to eat, drink, and wear what I please, and dress in any fashion that I like. I cannot sin, because I am born of God. I am a Reformer and am Reformed, and there is no Law against me. I have renounced the Devil and all his Works (that is, Priestcraft and all their forms)—their religious Poms and Vanities I abhor and detest and deny, and all the sinful lusts of their fleshly notions; and now I keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and I walk in the same all the days of my life at perfect liberty. And what think you? This is the real and only Coming of Christ,

the True Light—that lighteneth every man that cometh into this New World. So Christ is come and the Sabbath is begun. REMEMBER THAT THOU KEEP HOLY THE SABBATH DAY.

Now let all true Reformers press on boldly, and bring all their fellow men into this Sabbath: for this is the true Sabbath, to which those are enemies that are petitioning Parliament to keep up the Old Laws of Bondage and Misery. But we must instruct them; and many of them will see their way out of Egypt soon, for they are ignorant of the Scriptures which speak of this Great and Glorious Sabbath of Rest and Universal Peace: they are yet under the Devil, who is the God of their World, and they do not know him, yet they serve him, thinking him to be God; *therefore, they claim Our Pity.* They are zealously affected, but not well, and I would they were cut off that trouble the people, for they are enemies to Our God, the Lord of Sabbath, viz.—Love and Wisdom, Liberty and Freedom; and we must labour with all our might to pull the poor bewitched people out of the fire that the Devil (their own darkened understanding) has made for them, and is now going to heat the furnace seven times hotter than ever for them, and making the poor creatures the instruments of their own wretched Bondage.—I must now conclude this Brother Reformers, sincerely believing you will, and urging you to use all the means in your power to Oppose every system of Priestcraft, Tyranny, and Corruption, that will now make their last, but vain and fruitless stand against

UNIVERSAL REFORMATION.

I remain, Brother Reformers,

Your sincere Friend and Well-wisher,

ZECHARIAH, *chap. viii. v. 3.*

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BIRMINGHAM.

J. BRADBERRY, PRINTER, 70, CHEAPSIDE.